

A
SERMON
PREACH'D IN
TRINITY-COLLEGE CHAPEL,
On the 19th of *December*, 1717.
IN
COMMEMORATION
OF THE
FOUNDERS
AND
BENEFACTORS.

By JOHN COLBATCH, D. D.
one of the Senior *Fellows* of that *College*,
and *Casuistical* Professor of *Divinity* in the
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

CAMBRIDGE: 

Printed at the UNIVERSITY-PRESS, for *Cornelius
Crownfield*, Printer to the *University*; And are to be
Sold by *James Knapton*, at the *Crown* in *St. Paul's
Church-yard*, and *John Morphew* near *Stationer's-Hall*,
LONDON, 1718.

STERN

The Morning Post and Daily News
Trotter & Co. Limited

On the 1st of December 1877

CONFIDENTIAL
OF THE

FOUNDERS

BRITISH



BY JOHN COLEMAN, Esq.
one of the Senior Fellows of the College
and Chaplain of the University of Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE

Printed at the University Press, Cambridge
and sold by James Kington, at the Crown in St. Paul's Church-yard, and John Johnson and Son, in Pall Mall
LONDON 1718.

PROVERBS X. 7.

*The Memory of the Just is blessed:
but the Name of the Wicked
shall rot.*

NEXT to a good Conscience, that approves of our Doings, and gives us Confidence towards God; nothing in this Life brings greater Delight than the concurrent Approbation of Men: as when one perceives himself to have the good Word, and the good Will of such as observe his Conduct; and hath cause to hope the same from all that shall at any time be made acquainted with his Actions: For 'tis This that gives a Man Credit and Reputation in the World, or, as the Wise-man speaks a *Good Name*, which, according to him, is *rather to be chosen than great Riches*; and *loving Favour*, which he prefers to *Silver and Gold*. Honour, a Term of much the same Import, which is often set at an equal value with Life it self, and sometimes prefer'd before it, signifying little more than an acknowledgment of our Esteem and Affection for the Person to whom it is given,

A

ven, on account of the Opinion we have of his Worth: As on t'other side, Contempt, Infamy, and Disgrace are but Indications of the bad Opinion which People have of the Person concern'd, tho' they are reckon'd among the greatest Evils that can befall us in this Life, and sometimes make Life it self become a Burden hard to be born.

How it comes to pass that a Man's Mind shall be so affected with what others think concerning him, as that his Happiness or Misery should in any sort depend upon their Opinion, is what perhaps every One cannot answer to his own Reason. It's true, the good or bad Opinion which People have of a Man, will upon Occasions discover it self by some outward Significations of Esteem or Contempt; but if it goes no further, these cannot give him any bodily Pain or Pleasure; they neither offend nor gratify any one of his Senses, nor indeed are they ever regarded, but as they are suppos'd to represent the inward Thoughts of Men's Hearts. A Man's Interest in the World does indeed often depend upon the Opinion others have of him, and that is doubtless one great Cause, why He is so tender of his Reputation; but it cannot be the only nor the Principal Cause: For his Interest and his Honour sometimes prove incompatible, insomuch that if he will cleave to the

the one, he must forsake the other; and in that Case, an ingenuous Man is never at a Loss which of the two He is to abandon. Besides, Men are commonly then best pleas'd when their Fame spreads the widest, reaching to Places they shall never see, and to Persons from whom they expect neither Good nor Harm. Death puts an end to all the Interest a Man can have in this World, but does not set Bounds to his desire of Glory; For we shall seldom find any more earnest to maintain their Credit whilst they live, than to leave a good Name behind them at their Death; and such as despair of doing so, go out of the World with Regret upon that Account. Many there have been, and doubtless are, who have toy'd all their Life time upon Designs never, to take effect till their own Eyes were clos'd, and all in hopes that in after Ages their Names should be mention'd with Honour. And there have been many more that have cheerfully submitted to an honourable Death, rather than be forc'd to lead an ignominious Life.

For as much affected as Men are with a Desire of Glory, they have still a more lively Sense of Disgrace. This they cannot hide who may make a Shift to dissemble the other: and there is not any Condition of Life, that puts Men above or below the Reach of Contempt. Those in the highest Stations seem to be more

fenfibly touch'd than any, with every thing tending that Way. The wifest and beft of Men take what care they can that *no Man fhould defpife them*; the Beggar upon the Dunghill will be ftir'd with Reproach; and thofe more unhappy Wretches, that can be guilty of the baselt Practices, are offended when they are call'd what they are content and resolv'd to be; having ftill fo much regard to the Cenfures of the World, when they are afraid of nothing elfe, that they fhall ftand in fome awe of other Men's Confciencces, after they have got the Maftery of their own. And when their Crimes are fo notorious that they cannot be conceal'd; they fhall yet be offering at Excufes, be they ever fo frivolous, or fuch as can only ferve to betray their Shame.

The Truth is, the Symptoms of Shame will always be hanging about fuch Men, do they what they can to get rid on't. That, and it's contrary, the Defire of Glory, being peculiar to Man, as they affect him immediately in his moft fenfible Part, by which he differs from other Creatures; fo they feem infeparably inherent in his Nature. To divest himfelf of them, would be in a manner to put off the Man; and He that does fo, muft either have rais'd himfelf above the common Standard of human Nature, or rather he muft have funk many Degrees below it: Infenfibility of this fort being
very

very rarely, if ever, found, but in such as have little else to distinguish 'em from brute Creatures.

'Tis in vain then to ask a Man the Reason why He shou'd be pleas'd with Honour acquir'd by noble Actions; or why the wicked Wretch should be confounded with Shame, whose knavish Practices are brought to Light? For these Affections of the Mind are not in the Man's own Power; nor are they left to his Discretion, any further than to keep them settl'd upon their proper Objects. For the rest, He is as passive, as to them, as he is in Respect to any Pleasure or Pain that he feels in his Body, or rather much more so; for those affect only the outward Man, and may in a great Measure be kept from reaching further: whereas the Mind it self is wounded with Disgrace, which is as a Sword that pierces the very Soul. For all which, no other Reason can be given, but the good Pleasure of Him that created us: *It is He that hath made us so, & not we our selves.* --- But if we look forward to the final Causes of Things, we shall find our selves to be thus dispos'd, for Ends that are highly worthy of the divine Wisdom and Goodness.

The Well-Being at least of Men in this World depends upon their mutual Assistance of one another; but this they can neither give,
nor

nor receive, unless join'd together in Communities; nor could they ever continue so join'd, had they no other Principles of Action, but the Gratification of their sensual Appetites, or the Concern which every one has for his own separate Interest: for these would so often put many upon seeking the same Things, by all Methods of Force and Fraud, that they would soon be embroyl'd and become so hateful to one another, that Man would assoon come within the Reach of a Man, as he would stand in the Way of a Wolf, or any more dangerous Beast of Prey. But as every Man is dispos'd by Nature to covet as much of the Esteem and Good-Will of others, as he can possibly procure, this Principle directly tends to reconcile and unite them, The All-Wise Author of our Nature having so contriv'd it, that in order to gratify the strongest Passion of their Souls, they are prompted to such Things as must render 'em Agreeable and Beneficial to one another: by which means, Life, as it were, is preserv'd in human Society, just as we maintain Health and Vigour in our Bodies, by satisfying our craving Appetites. Hence we may learn the meaning of that immense Desire of Glory, which abounds so much in generous Minds, that it cannot be confin'd to Place or Time. It is in effect, but the Voice of Nature calling upon them to do all the Good they can, and that not

not to their Friends and Acquaintants only, but to as many as they can, of those that are afar off, and of those that are yet unborn.

It is indeed at present but a *still Voice*, and not generally understood, or at least not commonly hearkn'd to by all that pretend to Honour. For that general Corruption deriv'd to us from our first Parents is not more remarkable in any Instance, than in the Perversity of these Affections of the Mind, which are as often turn'd aside from their due Objects, as our bodily Appetites are from theirs: If these are sometimes so deprav'd as to make us loath the most wholesome Food, and lust after that which is hurtful to the Body, and even nauseous to an unvitiated Palate; so we may frequently observe the Desire of Glory, and the Sense of Shame to be so far inverted, that a Man shall pride himself with a ridiculous and insupportable Vanity, in that which he will blush at, when in his right Mind; and be ashamed of doing what wou'd best become him; looking upon That as a matter of Disgrace, in which, had He his Senses about him, he would place his chiefest Glory; and striving to get himself a Name, by doing such Things as will one day infallibly turn to his Confusion. The deplorable Consequence of which is, that we may sometimes observe Men that are well enough qualify'd for doing Good in several Respects,

spects, who, by the preposterous Course they take to advance their Glory, shall, instead of being a Blessing to their Neighbours become a publick Nuisance and a common Plague to all that are near 'em. And, what will as certainly follow, instead of those Honours with which they flatter their vain Imaginations, they shall draw upon themselves the Compassion of good Men, and of others the Indignation and Scorn.

The great Depravity of human Nature in this Respect is so apparent, that much Notice has been taken of it in the Heathen World: And it was the main Business of ancient Moralists to set Men right in their Notions as to this Matter. To which purpose was all that they taught about such Things as they call'd *Honestia* and *Turpia*. Καλὰ and Αἰσχρὰ. The most excellent Lawgivers of all civiliz'd Nations, to prevent the Mischiefs arising from mistaken Notions of this kind, took all possible care to have the Marks of Honour and Disgrace plac'd where they were most deserv'd, and where they might be so conspicuous as to serve for publick Direction. Our Holy Religion, which restores Nature to it's original Rectitude and Integrity, by reducing our Affections to Reason, abounds with Precepts to the same Purpose, and enforces them with the Sanction of the greatest Rewards and Punishments; proposing no less a
Reward

Reward than *Eternal Life*, to such as shall take the right way to *Glory and Honour and Immortality*; and denouncing the most terrible Woes, which, if not regarded, will end in *Shame and everlasting Confusion*, against false hypocritical Pretenders to Glory, that is, all such as shall affect the *Praise of Men*, when 'tis, in any wise, inconsistent with the *Praise of God*.

The Text I have chosen, as proper for the present Occasion, will give us a sure and certain Rule for our Direction in this Matter: For it can never fail, when understood and reduc'd to Practice. And I have chosen it at this Time, because the former Part of it warrants us in what we are now doing; for it both allows and obliges us to honour the Memory of our Founders and Benefactors: The latter Part indeed seems to be somewhat foreign to the proper Business of this Day: I shall therefore meddle with it little further, than as it may serve to illustrate what we are taught in the former. Tho', by the way, it may not be amiss to take notice of the Warning there given us. For in case we shou'd ever be so wicked, as by Breach of Trust, or otherwise, wilfully to frustrate Their pious Intentions, by whose Charity we are maintain'd, few People in the World would find themselves more concern'd in that latter Part of the Text than ourselves.

B

The

The Text then contains two distinct Propositions,

The First is, *The Memory of the Just is blessed.*

The Second, *The Name of the Wicked shall rot.*

My business will be to explain the Terms of which each Proposition consists, and with all, to shew the Connexion that is between them; and then to apply the Doctrine contain'd in the first Proposition to the present Occasion.

In explaining the Terms, the chief Difficulty will be to give an adæquate Notion of those that are the Subject of each Proposition. For, tho' none can be ignorant of their meaning in General, yet 'twill require some Consideration to determine precisely what they signify in this Place: For 'tis not every one, that might in some Sense be stil'd a Just or an Honest Man, whose Memory is, or shall be blessed: Nor does what is said of the Wicked or sinful Person, seem applicable to all that may come under that Denomination. I shall therefore begin with the two Prædicates as more easy to be understood, and when they are so, they may direct us how to fix the Sense of those other Terms.

First then, as to what is said concerning the Person here stiled, *The Just*, namely, that *his Memory is bless'd*; The Septuagint render the

the Word which we translate *Blessed*, *μετ' εὐλο-
γίας*. The Vulgate Latin hath, *cum laudibus*:
but both seem to come short of the Original
לְבָרְכָהּ which signifies *to* or *for* a Blessing: so
that the meaning of the Sentence seems to be,
that the Just shall be remember'd in Order to
be Blessed, or that Men shall remember him
for that very end and purpose that they may
bless him. Now to *Bless* in Scripture Phrase,
when it denotes the Act of one Man towards
another, that is his Equal or his Superior, signifies
a great deal more than to set forth his Praises,
(tho' it includes that :) for it comprehends like-
wise Respect, Love, Gratitude, and in short,
all that we mean by *Honouring* in the most ex-
tensive Signification of that Word. As when
we give Honour to them whom we most high-
ly admire and esteem, and towards whom we
are at the same Time the most kindly affected.
'Tis indeed the Term ordinarily us'd in Scripture
to express the Returns of Praise and Thanks-
giving that are due from Man to Almighty
God. Thus the *Psalmist* expressing his in-
ward Sentiments of the Divine Goodness—
*Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is
within me, bless his Holy Name: Bless the
Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Be-
nefits.* Ps. 103. v. 1, 2. In the 29th of *Job* 11th
and following Verses, it signifies the joyful and
grateful Acknowledgments, which Persons, re-

liev'd from extreme Affliction and Misery make to their Benefactor. *When the Ear heard me, then it Blessed me, and when the Eye saw me, it gave Witness to me: because I deliver'd the Poor that cry'd, and the Fatherless and him that hath none to help him: The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caus'd the Widow's heart to sing with Joy.* That magnificent Present with which *Jacob* according to the Eastern Custom, still in use, honour'd his Brother *Esau*, *Gen. 33*, is there call'd by him his *Blessing*; and under that Name was doubtless design'd by him, as an outward Testimony of the most profound Respect; as may appear, both from his Behaviour, for *he bow'd himself seven times to the ground, until he came near his Brother*; and from his Words, which were still more respectful; *Therefore I have seen thy Face, as tho' I had seen the Face of God, and thou wast pleased with me; Take, I pray thee my Blessing that is brought thee.*

The Words then of this first Part of our Text import no less than that the Person here call'd, *The Just*, shall attain to the highest kind of Honour, that the Condition of Mortals is capable of. For that he, by acting suitably to his Character, will imprint on the Minds of Men, such a lively and lasting Sense of his Merit, that they shall not only highly respect him whilst

whilst he lives, but will take occasions to remember him when Dead, and to celebrate his Memory, with all possible Demonstrations of Esteem and Affection.

That which is affirm'd of *the Wicked* in the second Part of our Text, seems design'd by the Wise-Man, for the Reverse of what he declares in another Place, *Eccel. 7. ch. v. 1.* He there says, *That a good Name is better than precious Ointments*; alluding, as 'tis suppos'd, to the practice of Eastern Nations to embalm their Dead, in order to keep them from Putrefaction with it's Consequents; and implying, that a good Name shall prove a better Preservative and Perfume, as it were, to a Man's Memory, than any precious Ointments will be to his Body. Whereas, on the contrary, the Name of the Wicked, as he here declares, shall perish together with himself; and be forgotten in as short a Time, as his Body would consume away. Or in case he gives the World cause to remember him, as wicked Men often do, he shall be mention'd with Abhorrence, his very Name will be as offensive to the Ear, as his Carcass would be to the Sight or Smell, were it order'd or suffer'd to rot above Ground.

But this, as I have said, is not surely the Lot of every sinful Man; nor, on t'other side, do all those that we take for honest Men, attain, either Living or Dead, to such transcendent

dent Honours as have been now mention'd. A Man must be something else than barely Just, according to what we usually call Justice, or he must be egregiously wicked above the common Rate, before he shall find himself either way concern'd in our Text, so as to expect that the Promise, or the Threat should be made good upon him or upon his Memory.

For let us consider Justice according to the ordinary Notion of the Word, whether Distributive or Commutative: It is very little more than a bare negative Virtue, if a Negative can be call'd a Virtue: It will indeed keep us from committing some sort of Crimes, but those Crimes are such as will render him infamous that commits them; and for that Reason, to abstain from them can deserve but small Thanks or Praise.

As for Distributive Justice, it concerns them only, that are trusted with the Disposal of publick Rewards; and all it positively obliges them to, is to make such Enquiry, as the Case will admit of, for those that deserve best. If they neglect to do thus much, they betray their Trust, and perjure themselves into the Bargain, in case an Oath be taken, as it commonly is. For the rest, all that's requir'd of them, is the Not-doing what would render 'em most contemptible in the Eyes of all that have any Notion of common Honesty. Let's suppose a Reward

ward to be publickly decree'd to such as have most signaliz'd themselves in any Military Action, or have made the greatest Improvement in any useful Art; and that a certain Number of Officers were sworn Judges in the former Case, or of Artisans in the latter: Should these Men out of any selfish Consideration, or to oblige those from whom they expected some private Advantage, adjudge the Prize to any, but such as they knew, or might, if they would, know to deserve it best. That would be to dispose of it as their own, which is much the same as if they converted it to their own Use: such Men wou'd rob the Publick, not only of what was deposited in their Hands, but of the Benefit which arises from a due Encouragement of Merit. And if they differ'd in any thing from Common Thieves, it must be upon account of such aggravating Circumstances as wou'd render them worthy of a much more shameful Punishment.

And then for that other Part of Justice, which is suppos'd to direct us in our ordinary Dealings with one another. The fundamental Rules of which are, That we keep our Faith; wrong no Man either by Force or Fraud, but give to every one his Due; and take no more to our selves than is ours in any Case; the Observance of these, and the like Precepts, will never entitle any to the glorious Reward propos'd in

our Text : For what Honour is it to Man, whilst he lives, that he is not a Perjurious or a Perfidious Wretch ; That he is not an Extortioner, a Cheat or a Robber ? Or what Veneration will it bring to his Memory, when it shall be said, that he has not undergone nor deserv'd the Punishment due to such Crimes ?

But tho' Men that are only thus far Just, cannot be the Persons meant in the former Part of our Text ; yet we need go no further in search of them that are chiefly concern'd in the latter. For Offenders against this Negative Justice, may certainly be reckon'd among those that, by way of Eminence, are stil'd *The Wicked*, Their Crimes being such as, if generally practic'd, must subvert the Foundation of human Society, and fill all Places with Rapine and Violence ; which would end in the common Ruin of any People or Nation : And they may be justly reputed guilty of all the Mischief which they do what in them lies, to effect. We need not go to prove that, what the Wicked are threatned with in our Text, shall be the Lot of such Men ; there being nothing more agreeable to the Judgment of Mankind, as People of all Nations shew by their dealing with Offenders of this Sort ; (such of them at least as the Laws can take hold of,) whom they either send out of the World, as not fit to live in it, by an ignominious Death ;
or

or they set such Marks of Disgrace upon them, that, as little Shame as they have left, Death it self might seem more eligible even to them. If the Memorial of such Men perish not with themselves, it will but be a means to perpetuate their Infamy.

But 'tis certain that the Holy Scriptures give us a much more large and comprehensive Notion of Justice. And that particular Branch of it, which we commonly take for the Whole, comes very short of what Reason dictated to the ancient Heathens.

According to the Scripture Notion, Justice or Righteousness (for 'tis the same Word in the Original) comprehends all those Virtues and Graces which Religion inspires us with: such of them especially, as dispose and incline us to the Offices of Humanity, Charity, Liberality, Mercy, Kindness; in short, to do all the Good we can to others, as often as we have an Opportunity of doing it. I need not in this Place quote all the Texts of Scripture that are commonly urg'd to this Purpose. I shall therefore only take Notice of the Description given by Holy *David* of the Righteous Man or the Good (for those are synonomous Terms with him) in the 37 and 112 *Psalms*; where he represents such a Man, as One that is *gracious and full of Compassion, That is ever merciful and sheweth Favour and lendeth, That*

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bath

bath dispers'd and given to the Poor: concerning this Man the Psalmist declares, that he shall be had in everlasting Remembrance, and that his Righteousness endureth for ever.

But it may not be amiss to give some short Account of what the wiser Heathens thought of this Matter. *Aristotle* declares Justice to be, not any Part of Virtue, but the Whole, Οὐ μέρος ἀρετῆς, ἀλλὰ ὅλη ἀρετή: And to shew that this was no particular Notion of his own, He quotes the following Verse from an Ancient Poet, — Ἐνδε δίκαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετή 'σσι.

He acknowledges no other Distinction between Justice and Virtue in general, but that a Man may be simply virtuous, consider'd apart by Himself: Whereas he that is Just, is alwaies so in Respect to other People, making use of every particular Virtue in promoting the Common Good: for which Reason he says Justice is ἀρετή μάλιστα τελεία, or the very Perfection of Virtue: He being the best Man, who is good, not in himself only, but to all about him. As on the contrary, he is consummately Wicked, who is both vicious in himself, and injurious to them that he has to deal with.

In this Point *Aristotle* perfectly agrees with his Master *Plato*, who frequently brings in *Socrates* disputing to the same Purpose.

Tully, who form'd his Notions of these Matters upon what he had collected from the Greek Moralists,

Moralists, represents Justice as the Foundation of every thing that is commendable in Man; and so be that from whence Good Men are so call'd, *Unde Viri boni nominantur*. He makes it to consist of two Parts, whereof the one is that Negative part before spoken of, namely, that we wrong no Man; The other, that we do what Good we can to all Men: And in respect to this latter Part he says, That Justice, *totam se ad alienas Utilitates porrigit atque explicat*. That this Virtue diffuseth it self in the practice of all the rest, which, according to him, are nothing else but Justice under different Names diversify'd according to it's Objects: That in Regard to the Deity, 'tis Religion; to Parents, Duty; towards Men in general, Goodness; in matters of Trust, Fidelity; in moderating our Resentments, Lenity; and Kindness among Friends. Lastly, That it makes all other Virtues to be what they are, and cannot be it self perfect without them. What we call Prudence, when void of Justice is, according to him, nothing else but knavish Cunning; and Fortitude but mere Brutality. On the other side, tho' Probity may in some Measure subsist where Prudence is wanting, yet he will scarce allow it the Name of Justice: But, a Coward, He thinks, can never be a Just Man. *Nemo justus esse potest, saith He, qui mortem, qui dolorem, qui exilium, qui egestatem timet;*

met; aut qui ea quæ hisce sunt contraria, æquitati antepōnit.

To be just then, according to the true Notion of that Word, is to have all the good Qualities that compleat the Character of a Virtuous Man; and to exert them all as there is Occasion in acquitting ones self of his private Obligations; and in procuring, what in us lies, the common Benefit of Mankind.

And now it will be no hard Matter to shew the Connexion between the Terms of our first Proposition. The Truth is, those Terms are convertible; for there can be nothing said to the Honour of any well deserving Person, but must be borrow'd from the Description of a Just Man. Wherefore, to represent him as he is in himself, is to give him the greatest Honour that a Man is capable of, consider'd as a Man in his moral Capacity: So that *Solomon* in saying that his *Memory is blessed*, said no more in Effect than his Father had said before him, when he declar'd that such a Man should be *had in everlasting Remembrance*, for to remember Him, must be to Bless his Memory; his Virtues necessarily affecting People's Minds with Love and Admiration; insomuch that there cannot be a more delightful Object offer'd to the Sight, than this is to the Mind; at least, in the Judgment of those that understand human Nature best. *Plato* thought there could be no Image so beauti-

beautiful and amiable as that of Virtue would appear, were it set before us. *Aristotle* declares Justice more to be admir'd than the brightest Star in the Firmament.

Οὐδ' ἔστι τις οὐτ' ἔστι οὐτο δαμασός.
 Saith He. A sensible Proof of all which, every Man, that deserves that Name, cannot but feel within his own Breast. He must certainly be of a Make different from that of other People; who can hear or read of an Action truly Good and Generous, and not be delighted with the Recital, and not love to revolve it over and over again in his Mind. And when Virtue and Vice may seem for a time to be at a Struggle, who is there can sit unconcern'd for the Event, or does not find himself insensibly engag'd in the just Cause, and become a Party before He was aware, at whatever distance of Time or Place the Scene may be lay'd? *Quis est tam dissimilis homini qui non moveatur & Offensione Turpitudinis & Comprobatione Honestatis—*
Quis Fregellanum Proditorem, quanquam Reipublicæ nostræ profuit, non odit— *Quis Aristidem mortuum non diligit? an obliviscamur quantopere in audiendo legendoque moveamur, cum pie, cum amice, cum magno animo aliquid factum esse cognoscimus?* This He observes to be the pure Impulse of Nature discovering it self after the same Manner both in Persons of an ingenuous Education, and in the
 rude

rude Multitude; as appear'd by the Acclamations it forc'd from the latter, when any signal Act of Virtue was represented on the Stage.

'Tis the Love that Men naturally have for such Objects of Delight and Admiration, and their Desire to keep them, as long as 'tis possible, present to their Minds, that have put People, in all Ages and Places, upon studying Ways to perpetuate the Memory of excellent Persons. This seems to have given Rise to many Anniversary Solemnities, and to have first occasion'd the erecting of Pillars, Pyramids, Mausoleums, Statues. It's true that People's Esteem and Gratitude did very soon, and in many Places, turn to a superstitious Fondness; which they made appear by consecrating Altars and Temples to the Virtues, and to the Persons of those they held in Admiration. But this, like all other Excesses which Men's Inclinations lead 'em to, when suffer'd to outrun their Reason, still shews how they naturally stand affected. It shews, that they must needs think them highly to deserve the greatest Honours, that the Condition of mortal Man is capable of, whom they suppos'd to partake of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, so far as to become proper Objects of Religious Worship.

But I find Time will not allow me to dwell upon this pleasing Part of my Subject, much less to handle the more odious Part as it deserves,

serves, tho' perhaps no less necessary to be inculcated and enlarged upon: I must therefore abruptly proceed to the Application.

We are met together at this Time to *Bless* the Memories of the Founders and Benefactors of this magnificent College; and of those lesser Bodies of which this great One was compos'd. To *Bless*, I say, their Memories, for so we must do whensoever we remember them by that Title, and to mention their Names upon any other Account would be impertinent at this Time: For which Reason, what we have to say of them will in a great Measure be applicable to other Founders and Benefactors of Colleges. However, all will agree, that the Praise, due to such eminent Promoters of Virtue and Learning, belongs in a peculiar manner to them that have contributed to the noblest Foundation of the Sort the World affords.

This must be allow'd concerning them, and all in General to whom the World is oblig'd, for their having kept up Learning in it, that they deserve a Place among the greatest Benefactors to Mankind; For 'tis to them in a great Measure, that the civiliz'd Part of Mankind owe the Benefits arising from human Society: For which Reason all that Honour ought to be pay'd to their Memories, which was really due to those, whom the Ancient Heathens had in the

the greatest Veneration: Those, who were most Idoliz'd by them, appear to be such as, either had reduc'd 'em from a State of Barbarity, by improving their inbred Principles of Reason and Virtue, into moral Rules for a social and a civil Life; or such as gave their Minds to find out useful Arts and Sciences, by which the Condition of Men in this World was render'd more commodious; for all which Rules, Arts and Sciences, by whomsoever invented or improv'd, together with the Benefits resulting from them, we stand indebted to them, by whose means Learning hath been preserv'd and propagated. For, were it not for That, Mankind would soon relapse into Ignorance, Confusion, and Barbarity. Wherefore 'tis fit that the Enemies of such Societies as this, shou'd be sometimes minded of their Obligations to us: for as little Learning as they may have themselves yet, they partake of the common Benefit arising from it, whilst they enjoy the Privileges of a civil Life; and are so much the better for it, by how much their Condition differs from that of a Wild *American* or a Brutish *Hotentot*.

But all this was a small Part of what they had in View, whose Memories we now *blest*; Their Charity being such, as could not be confin'd to this World; For their chief Design, in erecting these Nurseries of Learning, was, that they might prove subservient to Religion. To
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which end, they have made such Provision for the Education of Youth to be instructed in the Principles of Christianity, and inur'd to the Practice of it's Duties, that, whilst any Regard is had to the Rules they have prescrib'd us, The Church will never want a supply of such as, thro' the Blessing of God, may be successfully imploy'd in promoting the eternal Welfare of Mankind.

This was the peculiar Design of our Founders and Benefactors; nor has there been any thing wanting on their Parts to render it effectual: Of which our Statutes will be a convincing Proof, to all that shall peruse them without Prejudice: For in these every thing necessary or conducive to that Design is provided for with great Wisdom; and Directions given us, for carrying it on, so very plain, that they cannot be misinterpreted thro' Ignorance, let us affect it ever so much; and so practicable, that our departing from them in any material Point, can admit of no Excuse: I say, *in any material Point*; for it is not possible, that human Laws should be so contriv'd, but the Change of Times and of other Circumstances, may (as to the positive Part of them) make some small Alterations desirable: But in Matters relating to the Choice of Persons, that are to become Members of this Body; Their Instruction in the Principles of Religion, and all such Learning as may

be useful to 'em in that which ought to be their Principal Study; and the Maintenance of good Discipline in every Respect, our Statutes are so agreeable to natural Equity and the Reason of things, that to violate them, would, in our Case, be to break thro' the strongest Obligations that are upon us, as we are Men and Members of human Society, as well as Christians.

Time will allow me to insist only on the first of these Particulars, I mean, that part of our Statutes which direct us in the Choice of Scholars and Fellows; which is so agreeable to the known Rules of common Justice, that to deviate from it, in any the like Case, would be highly criminal were we under no Obligation of an Oath: It binds us carefully to examine the Persons concern'd, that is, all, that by the Statutes, are capable of an Election: To consider only their Merit, without Affection or Favour; and to chuse them, and them only, out of the whole Number, whom in our Consciences we shall judge to be the best qualify'd, *maxime idoneos*. All this, I say, is no more than what common Justice binds every Man to, in any the like Case: For He must be a very unrighteous Judge, that gives Sentence without having heard the Parties; or that debars any from a fair Hearing; or that hath Respect to Persons in Judgment, and, without considering the Merits of a Cause, shall determine in Fa-
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your of his Friend: He must be a very faithless Trustee, who shall give to one what he hath receiv'd in Trust for another, as He alwaies does in the present Case, who prefers not them that deserve best, to the unworthy and to the less deserving.

So just and reasonable is that solemn Obligation laid upon us in a Matter of the highest Importance, on which the whole Design of our Institution does chiefly depend: For, according to the ordinary Course of Things, That will never fail, if we keep our Integrity; but it can never have it's due Effect, should we prevaricate with God and Man in this Matter.

If we discharge our Trust, as we have bound our Souls to do, Our College will be alwaies producing, and alwaies sending out into the World, Men qualify'd to answer the Intention of our Founders. For when so many ingenuous Youths, as flock hither from all Parts, shall be made sensible, that, from the Time of their Admission, they become Candidates for Scholarships, and may be chosen Fellows, the same Year that they have taken their first Degree; and that Nothing can stand in their Way to Preferment, but the superior Merit of their Companions (since every One shall be admitted to a publick and impartial Examination,) He must be a Stranger to human Nature, that can imagine any thing so severe in our Discipline, that

Youths thus persuaded will not chearfully comply with; any Difficulties in Learning which they will not be animated to attempt and overcome. They are now in the Morning, as it were, of Life, when the Faculties of the Mind exert themselves with the greatest Vivacity and Vigour: 'Tis at their Age, that the Desire of Glory and the Sense of Shame have the strongest Influence on the Mind; It being properly the Young Man's Ambition,

Αἰὲν ἀγριτεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

And with this they'l be the more enflam'd, the more they have to contend with; so that 'tis a peculiar Advantage to this great Body, that there are, or ought to be, so very many Concurrents at every Election. For 'tis not only true, that the best Choice is alwaies made out of the greatest Number, but the more they are that stand in Competition, the greater Proficients they'l all of 'em be; every Competitor adding a Spur to the Diligence of the rest: So that, whoever gain the Prize they'l all grow the better by contending for it. What a mighty Advantage might be made of this natural Emulation of theirs, to their own and the publick Good, when directed the right Way, may appear from the Effects it commonly has in Matters of an Indifferent Nature, and too often in such as are Blame-worthy; for it will alwaies be exercising it self upon something, and if they
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be not employ'd about that which is good and laudable, they'l be labouring to excel each other in Trifles, or that which is worse. The Effects of it were very remarkable of old in the *Græcian* Youth: They could submit themselves, for a long Course of Years, to a most painful Drudgery, accompany'd with an irksome Diet, in Hopes, that they might, one Day, be admitted to put in for the *Olympick* or the *Isthmian* Prize; and all for the Glory of signalizing their Strength and Activity of Body: Wherein let a Man exercise Himself ever so much, he'l never come near to many Brute Creatures: so that the Victor's Merit was so small, that it might be thought sufficiently rewarded with his *Pansley* Garland. But here the Prize is offer'd to such as shall, the most nearly, attain to the noblest Accomplishments of Human Nature; in which 'tis the proper Glory of a Man to excell. For here the Enquiry will or ought to be, Who hath treasur'd up most of such Knowledge as will serve to improve his Reason, and regulate his Manners? Whose Behaviour hath made it most appear, that He grows every Day Wiser and Better by what He learns? And Who hath been exercising Himself most, and to best Purpose, in such Arts as will be of Use and Ornament to him in every Condition of Life?

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It is not credible that Creatures endu'd with rational Souls can be in Doubt, on which of these Accounts, it will best become them to distinguish themselves: It can surely be no Question among those that stand here before us; of whom it is hop'd that they are all of them, *ad Laudem & ad Decus nati, suscepti instituti.*— But — *Hic sunt Homines* — It is according to the Turn they shall here take, that they are like to prove hereafter. If they shall now be directed aright, there is not any Profession or Station, that they may not one Day come to adorn; after having been Disciplin'd and Exercis'd, as our Statutes require, in this noble *Gymnasium*, or rather in so conspicuous a Theatre, as our College, when rightly order'd, can never fail to be; For the World will then have it's Eyes continually upon us. — We see what a Confluence of Nobility and Gentry, The Virtue of One Man daily draws to one of our least Colleges; and is it possible that *This* should lie hid in an inglorious Obscurity, when govern'd according to our Statutes, and consequently fill'd with Persons every Way fit for their respective Stations?

On the other side, if they shall be abandon'd to Themselves, and their own Youthful Imaginations, without any Account taken of their Behaviour, or Notice of their Improvements; If the Rewards, that should invigorate our
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Discipline, shall be given promiscuously, without Distinction of Merit, to the Disorderly as well as to the most Regular, the Diligent and the Slothful; or if they only shall hope to be prefer'd, who are recommended to us from Abroad, or are push'd forward by underhand Practices at Home; and all shall be sure to go off at last with a like solemn Attestation to the Progress they have made in Virtue and Learning. — There may, notwithstanding all this, be among them, who shall prove excellent Men. — But no Thanks to us for't, they wou'd be the same, or much better, had they been educated elsewhere. For the rest, the best that can be said of us will be, that we are as *Salt that hath lost it's Savour*; That we have defeated the whole Design of our Institution, making it become useless to the Publick; and, in Return for the liberal Maintenance we enjoy, thro' the Bounty of our Founders, do what in us lies, to bring a lasting Reproach upon their Memories, as if they had *imagin'd such a Device as they were not able to perform*.

But the Reproach will never stick there; it will return a Hundred Fold upon our selves: Our Founders and Benefactors, in order to effect the utmost that I have been mentioning, have requir'd at our Hands nothing that is impracticable or difficult; or that Good Men in our Station would not take Pleasure to be employ'd

ploy'd in; I mean, the Advancement of Learning, and the Encouragement of Virtue. They are Both done every day with Great Success by Men, that have none of our peculiar Obligations upon them, and are destitute of those many Advantages that we abound with. 'Tis now a considerable time, since Persons of all Ranks, from those of the first Quality, down to the very Mechanics, have, to the great Honour of our Country, united themselves into a Society, for the Improvement of Arts and Sciences. The same is done, or doing, in almost every noted City, all *Europe* over. Our Laity are at this very Time, in every Part of the Nation, associating themselves for the Suppression of Vice and *Promoting Christian Knowledge*,

Et dubitamus adhuc ————— ?

But if We, not content to sit still, and see our Work taken out of our Hands, shall resolve not only not to prosecute, but wholly to Invert the Design of our Institution, setting up another kind of Discipline, in direct Opposition to that prescrib'd us, Preferring our Young People, according as they shall be approv'd of by the vilest Sycophants, and appear the most likely to tread in their Steps, or shall have been most successful in undermining and supplanting their Brethren: (For That, in all likelihood, will then be the Principal Study of many, who, could

could they confide in our Integrity, would be labouring to excel each other in every thing that is good and laudable:) By which means, this Royal Magnificent College may, in time, become a Nursery of servile Flatterers and tricking Knaves; who, if any, do surely deserve the Title of *humani Generis Opprobria*; If such Methods shall ever come to be us'd, as may tend to corrupt our Old Men, as well as our Young, and working upon their Hopes or upon their Fears, may allure or force them to let go their Integrity, and betray their Trust, whether in This, or in any Other Matter of Importance. — If This shall ever come to be Our Case, as, how soon it may, God knows, who is alone able to prevent it, We shall then have little Cause to complain of our Obscurity; We shall wish rather that thick Darkness might cover us — But in vain — For We are as a City that is set upon a Hill, which cannot be hid. — Cover'd indeed We shall be — with Shame, Shame that, without Repentance and Amendment, and Reparation (so far as 'tis possible) for the Wrong We shall have done to the Publick, and to all that have been defrauded of their Right, will infallibly turn to *everlasting Confusion*. And even in this World, it will be with us, as 'twas with the *Israelites*, when under the utmost Severity of God's Judgment. We shall become an *Astonishment, a Proverb, and a By-Word*;

*A Reproach to our Neighbours, a Scorn and Derision to them that are round about us; And at this House which is high, every One that passeth by shall be Astonish'd, and shall Hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this House? And they shall answer. Because they forsook the Lord their God. — This will be our Portion — But tho' our Names shall rot upon the Earth, yet will the Memory of our Founders and Benefactors be Blessed, by all that shall consider with how much Wisdom as well as Charity, they have study'd to promote the Happiness of Mankind. Or if their Glory shall in any respect be obscur'd among Men, by our frustrating their pious Intentions, yet we may be sure, that their Reward will be the same in Heaven, as if the Success had been every way equal to their Desires. And there we know, *They that be Wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.**

F I N I S.

